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Security Council

Fifty-third Year

Provisional

3952nd Meeting

Tuesday, 8 December 1998, 4.55 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Buallay	(Bahrain)
Members:	Brazil	Mr. Cordeiro
	China	Mr. Shen Guofang
	Costa Rica	Mr. Niehaus
	France	Mr. Dejammet
	Gabon	Mr. Moungara-Moussotsi
	Gambia	Mr. Jagne
	Japan	Mr. Konishi
	Kenya	Mr. Mahugu
	Portugal	Mr. Monteiro
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Slovenia	Mr. Türk
	Sweden	Mr. Lidén
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Richmond
	United States of America	Ms. Soderberg

Agenda

The situation in Afghanistan

Report of the Secretary-General (S/1998/1109)

Letter dated 23 November 1998 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1998/1139)

98-86644 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 4.55 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Afghanistan

Report of the Secretary-General (S/1998/1109)

Letter dated 23 November 1998 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1998/1139)

The President (*interpretation from Arabic*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In accordance with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Nejad Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran) and Mr. Kamal (Pakistan) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*interpretation from Arabic*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, document S/1998/1109; and the letter dated 23 November 1998 from the Secretary-General to the President of the Security Council, document S/1998/1139.

Members of the Council also have before them document S/1998/1140, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations.

The first speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Nejad Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran): Sir, I am very pleased to see you, Ambassador Mohammed Buallay, the Permanent Representative of the friendly neighbouring country of Bahrain, presiding over the proceedings of the Security Council in December. I would also like to express appreciation to Ambassador Burleigh for the excellent manner in which he guided the deliberations of the Security Council during the month of November.

I wish also to thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/1998/1109). On previous occasions I have expressed my Government's gratitude to the Secretary-General's Special Envoy, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, for all his efforts. I would like to place on record here that we are very grateful to him and his colleagues in the Department of Political Affairs and to the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan (UNSMA) for their tireless efforts, which have removed some of the additional problems in Afghanistan caused by the murder of Iranian diplomats and a journalist by the Taliban in Mazar-e-Sharif on 8 August this year. The bodies of the Iranian diplomats and the journalist have been returned to Iran and all Iranian civilians known to have been detained in Afghanistan have been released. The last of the Iranian detainees were released to a Foreign Ministry technical team dispatched to Afghanistan last month to visit and assess damage to the Iranian diplomatic premises in Herat, Kandahar and Kabul.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is determined to see that those responsible for the cold-blooded murder of its diplomatic personnel and the correspondent of the Islamic Republic News Agency in Mazar-e-Sharif are apprehended and brought to justice in keeping with international standards of a fair trial. In his horrific report (A/53/539) on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights describes the group that murdered the Iranian diplomats and the journalist as "Taliban forces and persons allied with them, including those described as 'Punjabi Taliban'" (A/53/539, p. 4), and says that the group was led by a senior Taliban Commander named Mullah Fazel Ahmed or Fazel Mohammed.

In this connection, I would like to note paragraph 26 of the Secretary-General's report, where we read that the Taliban leader, Mullah Omar, in the meeting with Mr. Brahimi on 14 October "confirmed his commitment

to the continued investigation by the Taliban of the killing of the Iranian diplomats and the Iranian journalist in Mazar-e-Sharif, and promised that the Taliban authorities would support and cooperate with an international mission of inquiry into all circumstances surrounding the fate" of the slain Iranian diplomats and journalist. Exactly four months since the murder, and nearly two months since the commitment by the Taliban leader to Mr. Brahimi to an investigation, we are still awaiting the first preliminary report about the result of such an investigation.

In this context, we welcome the provision of the draft resolution, in paragraph 5 which

> "*Condemns* the capture by the Taliban of the Consulate-General of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the murder of the Iranian diplomats and a journalist in Mazar-e-Sharif, *stresses* that these acts constitute flagrant violations of international law, and *calls upon* the Taliban to cooperate with the United Nations in investigating these crimes with a view to prosecuting those responsible."

This is a very important pending issue, which the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran intends to pursue vigorously in Afghanistan through the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy. As I indicated earlier, it adds to the already chronic and complex problem in Afghanistan, which threatens regional and international peace and security.

The Islamic Republic of Iran remains deeply concerned about the political and humanitarian situation in Afghanistan. The Taliban's persistence in seeking a military solution, despite the wishes of the international community and repeated pleas by the Security Council to halt the fighting and enter into a political dialogue aimed at establishing a broad-based, multi-ethnic and fully representative Government, continues to pose an increasing threat to regional peace and security and cause yet more human suffering for a people who have suffered more than their fair share in the last two decades.

The draft resolution is being considered because of the lack of progress in the implementation of resolution 1193 (1998) and the "Points of Common Understanding" adopted on 21 September by the ministerial meeting of the "six plus two" group, which called upon the Taliban to establish a ceasefire and initiate political negotiations under the auspices of the United Nations in order to establish a Government that is truly representative of all Afghan people. In this context, my delegation supports the draft resolution, despite the fact that we believe the gravity of the situation on the ground, in terms of both the magnitude of systematic human rights violations and the threat the situation poses to regional and international security, warranted a stronger and earlier response by the Council.

The historical realities and the traditional structure of Afghanistan as a multiethnic country make it abundantly clear that no single group or ethnicity, however supported by outside forces, can rule over that country and bring back peace and normalcy to Afghanistan. The Taliban now rules by brute force and is financed by drug money and outside interests. The present situation, under which Afghan ethnic and religious groups, including the regular Pashtoons, are suppressed and live in horror, will not last and the conflict will endure. The solution lies in a resolute process of international persuasion for inter-Afghan political negotiations under the auspices of the United Nations, with a view to establishing a broad-based and representative Government acceptable to all ethnic, religious and political groups in Afghanistan.

My Government is committed to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Afghanistan. While the ultimate responsibility for bringing about peace and thus allaying the concern of the international community and, in particular, Afghanistan's neighbours, lies with the people of Afghanistan, my Government supports and continues to cooperate with United Nations efforts, particularly those of Ambassador Brahimi, which have a central role to play in attaining the goals of national reconciliation and a lasting political settlement, with the participation of all parties to the conflict and all segments of Afghan society.

The President (*interpretation from Arabic*): I thank the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Pakistan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Kamal (Pakistan): Since this is the first time I have addressed the Council under your presidency, Sir, allow me to share with you our pleasure at seeing you, the Ambassador of a friendly and brotherly country, chairing the meetings of the Council this month.

Allow me also to express through you our appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Peter Burleigh, for the highly efficient manner in which he guided the affairs of the Council last month.

Since the last full meeting of the Security Council on the Afghanistan issue, on 28 August 1998, there has been a significant improvement in the internal situation of Afghanistan as well as a visible reduction in the tension between Afghanistan and Iran. These positive developments are attributable to the concerted efforts of the international community, particularly the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, and to the determination of the people and leadership of Afghanistan to restore peace in their country.

Despite these positive developments, much needs to be done to steer the country out of the devastation of a protracted conflict and to put it on the track of reconciliation, progress and prosperity. The people of Afghanistan deserve peace after seeing the plundering of their country as a result of a prolonged and brutal Soviet occupation and the subsequent internal power struggle among the Afghan factions.

We want to place on record our appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and his Special Envoy, Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi, for their concerted efforts towards the restoration of peace in Afghanistan. It was due to a timely initiative of the Secretary General that the ministerial meeting of the "six plus two" countries was convened in New York on 21 September 1998. The meeting took a number of important decisions, including the decision to request Ambassador Brahimi to visit the region to defuse the potentially volatile situation created by the tension between Afghanistan and Iran.

Ambassador Brahimi's visit to Afghanistan, in coordination with the Organization of the Islamic Conference, enabled him to take up directly with Mullah Mohammad Omar the demands put forward by the Foreign Ministers of the six plus two countries. We note with appreciation that the Kabul authorities have addressed most of those demands, which has greatly contributed to the easing of the tension between Afghanistan and Iran. They have, first, returned the dead bodies of the Iranian diplomats killed in Mazar-e-Sharif; secondly, expressed regret to the families of the Iranians killed in Afghanistan; thirdly, undertaken to apprehend and punish those responsible for the killings of Iranian consulate personnel in Mazar-e-Sharif; fourthly, agreed to the establishment of an mission of inquiry to investigate both past and recent mass killings; and, fifthly, repatriated all Iranian prisoners.

The Kabul authorities also expressed their readiness to broaden the ethnic dispensation of their Government. They were, however, of the view that the defeated and discredited warlords should not be allowed any role in the political process of the country, as it is those warlords who were responsible for Afghanistan's continuing tragedy.

Pakistan believes that there is now a distinct possibility of the restoration of peace in Afghanistan. However, this will not be possible without the cessation of all outside interference in Afghanistan. The recent impounding by the Kyrgyz authorities of a full trainload of weapons destined for Ahmed Shah Massoud — 700 tons according to some reports — shows that massive arms supplies continue to be smuggled into Afghanistan by outsiders.

The international community must now adjust to the new realities on the ground in Afghanistan by recognizing the Kabul authorities as the *de jure* and de facto Government of Afghanistan. There is also a need to shed our biases and to take advantage of the window of opportunity by seeking a realistic and practicable solution to the conflict in Afghanistan.

The countries sharing borders with Afghanistan have a particular responsibility to work for the restoration of peace and harmony, instead of raising alarms over imaginary threats. We are encouraged by the pronouncements made by the Kabul authorities that their agenda is purely domestic and that it poses no threat to any neighbouring country. Our efforts should be to establish a relationship of trust and confidence with them, and to avoid seeking pretexts for interfering in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. In this context, we welcome the proposed meeting of the six plus two group in Tashkent. We are confident that the meeting will contribute to our collective goal of restoring peace in Afghanistan.

Let me now turn to the draft resolution on Afghanistan before the Security Council today. While the draft resolution has been significantly modified compared to the first draft submitted by the same source some months back, it continues to have a number of serious shortcomings. The draft resolution paints a pessimistic picture of the situation in Afghanistan. It ignores the fact that there is peace today in nearly 90 per cent of that

country. It ignores some recent positive developments, such as the exchange of prisoners between the Kabul authorities and the forces of Ahmed Shah Massoud. It ignores the signing of a supplementary protocol to the memorandum of understanding between the United Nations and the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan on 23 October 1998, under which the Kabul authorities have agreed to take a number of steps to facilitate the provision of United Nations assistance to Afghanistan. It ignores the fact that the Taliban have in principle allowed the stationing of United Nations personnel in several of their cities to monitor human rights violations. It ignores, most conspicuously, the ongoing shelling of Kabul by the forces of Ahmed Shah Massoud, frequently using Luna rockets.

While the draft resolution expresses unsubstantiated concerns about ethnic and religious-based persecution, particularly against the Shias, it makes no mention of the fact that the most notable Shia religious leader, Ustad Akbari, and several important Shia commanders, have voluntarily joined the Taliban and that discussions are currently under way for their participation in government in important positions.

There is also no mention of the mass killings of Taliban by the forces of the northern alliance in Mazar-e-Sharif in May last year. The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan was shown several hundred dead bodies of Taliban killed in Mazar-e-Sharif. He was also shown recently dug graves of about 3,000 victims of last year's massacre.

Furthermore, while the Taliban authorities have formally imposed a ban on the production, transport and sale of landmines, there are reports that the northern alliance has continued to lay mines periodically. The draft resolution neither refers to this important issue nor censures the northern alliance for its indiscriminate use of landmines with severe consequences for innocent women and children.

The overall tone and tenor of the draft resolution is thus biased against one party to the conflict. That and its noticeable and numerous omissions do not augur well for the image of the United Nations, or of the Security Council for that matter, as an impartial player.

The Security Council has expressed its readiness to consider the imposition of measures against the Taliban in particular. This is likely to send a wrong signal to the Kabul authorities. We strongly believe that dialogue and engagement, rather than coercion and intimidation, would produce the desired results.

Pakistan's consistent policy has been the promotion of a peaceful and negotiated settlement in Afghanistan. In order to achieve this objective, Pakistan has made serious efforts in engaging with all sides in the conflict. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has on numerous occasions brought the leaders of all Afghan factions together with a view to encouraging a political solution to the impasse.

Pakistan has suffered more from the conflict in Afghanistan than any other country, excluding Afghanistan itself. As a consequence of the continued instability in Afghanistan, Pakistan continues to host more than 1.5 million Afghan refugees more than six years after voluntary repatriations started. We stand almost single-handed in looking after these refugees in the face of donor fatigue and the indifference of the international community to their plight. Pakistan has also been a victim of terrorism, drug trafficking and arms smuggling as a result of conditions inside Afghanistan.

We note with appreciation that the United Nations and other agencies are likely to resume their work in Afghanistan. The people of Afghanistan are in need of substantial humanitarian supplies to sustain their livelihood. The Afghan economy has been completely destroyed due to 10 years of struggle against the Soviet military intervention and the subsequent civil war. There is no hope of its revival without massive international assistance. For the moment, the Afghan people depend heavily on food and other essential items from Pakistan, which enable them to survive at the subsistence level. Regardless of political considerations, the Member States must face up to this grave humanitarian challenge and provide all possible financial, technical and material assistance on a priority basis.

For our own part, I would, in conclusion, like to reiterate our full support for all efforts aimed at seeking durable peace and prosperity in Afghanistan through engagement and dialogue and humanitarian assistance commensurate with the magnitude of the tragedy that this country has had to face now for almost 20 years, since it was subjected to a massive foreign invasion.

The President (*interpretation from Arabic*): I thank the Representative of Pakistan for his kind words addressed to me.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution (S/1998/1140) before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I shall first give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): The Russian Federation came forward with the initiative to have the Security Council adopt a new resolution on Afghanistan designed to give an assessment of the present phase of the Afghan conflict.

Disregarding the will of the international community that they cooperate for a peaceful settlement of the conflict in Afghanistan and the aspirations of the Afghan people for national concord and the preservation of the integrity of the country, the Taliban have made yet another attempt to resolve the Afghan problem by force of arms, to expand their control over the entire territory of Afghanistan and to impose upon the people of that country a regime based on religious fanaticism, extremism and intolerance of dissent. Russia views the escalation of military activities in the north of Afghanistan by the Taliban as a real threat to the southern borders of the Commonwealth of Independent States and, together with other members of the Commonwealth, reserves its right to take all necessary measures to ensure the proper protection of its borders, including measures in accordance with existing international legal commitments.

The Taliban's military expansion in northern Afghanistan is being carried out with the direct involvement of foreign military personnel, in planning and in logistical operations, as well as in fighting on the side of the Taliban. This is borne out by concrete facts, including the capture by the forces of the Islamic Government of Afghanistan of a large number of non-Afghan prisoners of war. Massive military assistance brings to naught the efforts of the international community to establish an inter-Afghan negotiating process, strengthens the Taliban's pretension to unilateral control over the country and leads them to scorn the elementary norms of civilized conduct and to commit large-scale crimes.

The refusal to accept a durable ceasefire; the repeated undermining of negotiations and the final withdrawal from negotiations; the unwillingness to cooperate with the representatives of other political forces; the killing of foreign diplomats, journalists and staff of international organizations; mass persecutions, forcible displacements and even executions for national or religious reasons, including the massacres in Mazar-e-Sharif and Bamyan; systematic and flagrant violations of human rights, including discrimination against girls and women; encouraging the spread of illicit drug-trafficking and supporting international terrorism — this is but an incomplete list of the Taliban's activities, which are well known to the entire international community. There have even been reports that Hazara elders were taken prisoner, transported to Kabul and put on display in a cage.

It is high time for the Taliban leadership to acknowledge that there can be no military solution to the Afghan problem and to forbid such conduct. Those leaders must immediately halt military activities and, on the example of the Government coalition, agree to the establishment of a long-term ceasefire and the commencement of serious negotiations regarding ways and means to establish peace and national concord in the country. Only through the Taliban's steadfast implementation of United Nations decisions, including decisions on key issues of the Afghan settlement, can there be a basis for constructive interaction with other Afghan parties and the world community to establish a lasting peace in Afghanistan.

A decisive, coordinating and integrating role in the drafting of any plan for an Afghan settlement must belong to the United Nations. In that connection, we support the efforts carried out by Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi on the basis of the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council. We also support the activities of the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan. We find the Secretary-General's proposal to create a civil affairs unit within that Mission justified.

We continue to attach great hopes to the activities of the "six plus two" group, which remains the fundamental international forum for negotiations on a settlement in Afghanistan. We attach great significance to a thorough preparation of the Tashkent meeting of representatives of that group of States in order to work out a uniform policy with respect to the Taliban and other Afghan parties. Among other things, the members of the group could assume the responsibility of refusing to provide military support to the parties to the Afghan conflict and of not allowing their territories to be used for that purpose. This would undoubtedly give further impetus to all work done on the Afghan front.

We support the appeal of the Secretary-General to render comprehensive assistance to the Afghan population. We welcome the fourth meeting of the Afghanistan Support Group, which began yesterday in Tokyo with the participation of representatives of donor countries — including Russia — and a number of international and non-governmental organizations. We hope that the outcome of that meeting will foster the mobilization of international efforts to respond to the acute humanitarian situation in central and north-eastern Afghanistan.

We demand that the Taliban ensure the safety and security of international humanitarian staff and grant them unimpeded access to all regions under their control so that they can render assistance to all people in Afghanistan who need it.

The Russian Federation, despite its domestic economic difficulties, continues to render humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan. Last year and this year, Russia's Ministry for emergency situations provided various forms of humanitarian assistance, worth about $600,000, to assist the Afghan population suffering because of the continuing hostilities, as well as because of the earthquake.

Russia is prepared to continue constructive cooperation with all Afghan factions and interested States in order to resolve the conflict in Afghanistan on the basis of the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council.

Ms. Soderberg (United States of America): By adopting this draft resolution today, the Security Council takes a clear stand against terrorism and those who support it by providing safe haven to terrorists. The international community's resolve to fight terrorism is clear. Criminal acts of terrorism can never be justified. Terrorists must not receive sanctuary anywhere, anytime.

We call on all Afghan factions, particularly the Taliban, to abide by this and earlier resolutions and ensure that all indicted terrorists on their soil are brought to justice.

Afghanistan-based terrorism has become a plague. Terrorists trained or based in Afghanistan have been responsible for incidents in all corners of the globe. This was brought home to us tragically by the bombing of our embassies in Nairobi and Dar-es-Salaam last August.

We have publicly condemned the killing of the Iranian diplomatic staff at the Consulate-General in Mazar-e-Sharif. This criminal act must be investigated and the perpetrators punished. We fully support an international investigation into these deaths and once again remind all Afghan factions of the special protected status of diplomats under international law.

We join in the draft resolution's demand that the Taliban immediately inform the United Nations of the results of their investigation into the deaths of United Nations workers in Kabul and Jalalabad.

Concerns about the safety of international and humanitarian personnel hamstring programmes that seek to relieve the suffering of the Afghan people and rebuild the country. The Taliban must implement the necessary safeguards for the return of United Nations and other international personnel.

We are pleased that this draft resolution supports human rights initiatives in Afghanistan, including an investigation into reports of mass killings and the stationing of human rights monitors throughout the country.

Respect for human rights and international humanitarian law is the foundation of a long-term solution to the conflict. The Taliban in particular must respect the rights of the Afghan people, especially women and girls, as well as minorities.

We are particularly gratified that this draft resolution recognizes and encourages the work of the group of "six plus two". We believe that the "points of common understanding" adopted at the group's first ministerial-level meeting on 21 September constitute a solid basis for resolving the conflict in Afghanistan. The points set clear markers as to what the international community desires from both the Afghan factions and Afghanistan's neighbours.

Finally, the United States would once again like to express its deep appreciation to Special Representative Brahimi. Ambassador Brahimi has truly made an outstanding effort to bring peace to Afghanistan. His recent visit significantly reduced regional tensions, advanced the cause of human rights and laid the groundwork for the full resumption of aid activities in Afghanistan.

Mr. Niehaus (Costa Rica) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Rarely do we find among international society such clear and broad agreement as we are witnessing

today with respect to the situation in Afghanistan. We all share a logical and rational political and legal vision as to the origins and substance of the Afghan crisis, the assigning of specific responsibilities and obligations, and ways and means of settling the conflict.

Nonetheless, confrontation in Afghanistan has in recent months not only persisted but escalated and worsened owing to, *inter alia,* new military offensives by the Taliban forces; a stepping up of ethnic and religious persecution; gender-based discrimination; the use of Afghan territory to shelter terrorist groups; an increase in the cultivation, production and trafficking of illegal drugs; and the deteriorating standard of living of the civilian population.

Given such a disquieting picture, and although practically everything has been said about the Afghan situation, my delegation deems it imperative to issue a renewed and strong appeal to all internal and external parties to the Afghan conflict to take, once and for all, responsibility for finding an early and negotiated settlement to the armed conflict that has beset that country for decades.

We demand of the Afghan factions, and of the Taliban in particular, that they put an immediate end to military confrontation and conclude a ceasefire. Given the present circumstances, that will be possible only as a result of negotiations under the auspices of the United Nations, through its Special Envoy and with the unswerving and active support of the "six plus two" group, which we would ask to redouble its efforts to that end.

An effort of this nature requires credibility and confidence among all parties. In this connection, we believe it essential for the Taliban to shoulder the responsibility it bears with respect to the murder of international humanitarian workers and of diplomats from Iran. This extremely serious matter requires a prompt and transparent investigation to clarify responsibilities and identify the real perpetrators of those murders.

Likewise, Costa Rica deems it imperative to demand of the Taliban that it put an end to its policies and actions that violate human rights, in particular with respect to discrimination against women and girls. We believe that an appropriate solution to the Afghan problem must address this issue and that, although some have attempted to minimize its importance or regard it in relative terms, it must continue to command the Security Council's attention.

Furthermore, we demand once again of all factions, and of the Taliban in particular, that they cease any and all activities contrary to international humanitarian law, in particular those aimed at hindering and impeding the delivery of aid to the civilian population.

All of these matters in and of themselves are of extreme importance in resolving the internal situation in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, Costa Rica wishes to draw attention to two issues of particular importance that have international implications which go beyond Afghan borders and in whose connection the Taliban's responsibility has been noted. I refer here to the shelter and protection that it has offered, and continues to offer, to foreign terrorist groups on the one hand, and its active participation in drug-trafficking activities on the other. These are extremely sensitive matters for the international community. The Taliban's involvement is unacceptable and must cease as soon as possible and unconditionally.

As we have said, the principal responsibility for resolving the Afghan problem lies with the factions within that country, in particular the Taliban. But that alone will not suffice, because the Afghan crisis involves external actors with ties to and interests in the struggle, whose identity we all know and who must be held accountable. I refer here to those that have promoted and backed internal groups — politically and materially — and to those that have sinned by omission by not using their particular influence and weight to put an end to the conflict.

Costa Rica wishes to take this opportunity to demand of those countries, all of which are Members of the United Nations, that they commit themselves to, and act in accordance with, a constructive policy aimed at a cessation of the conflict, an end to intolerance, and respect for human rights in Afghanistan.

It is for these reasons that we have participated actively in the negotiations and consultations that led to the draft resolution before us for consideration. We believe that it is the obligation of the Security Council to take a well-defined approach to this conflict, but above all we feel that it is the responsibility of this body to promote and support a joint position on resolving the Afghan problem. This text is a step in the right direction, and for that reason we lend it our full support.

Mr. Konishi (Japan): At the outset, I wish to convey to the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Ambassador Brahimi, the sincere appreciation of the

Government of Japan for his effective efforts in defusing the tensions between Iran and the Taliban in Afghanistan and the surrounding region. Indeed, the easing of tensions between the two parties is a prerequisite to the resumption of international efforts to promote the peaceful settlement of the conflict in that country.

Having said that, however, I regret to note that the parties to the conflict in Afghanistan have not shown any willingness to heed the voice of the international community and enter into direct negotiations aimed at a ceasefire or the achievement of peace. In August, the worsening security situation forced United Nations agencies to evacuate their personnel from Afghanistan. The Security Council responded by convening a meeting later that month at which it adopted resolution 1193 (1998) and by issuing a presidential statement in September. That these efforts have not resulted in any improvement in the situation is a source of grave concern. Japan hopes that the security situation in Afghanistan will significantly improve so that United Nations personnel can return to the region and resume their work as soon as possible.

Japan concurs with the view expressed in the report of the Secretary-General that it is now necessary to build upon the results of the efforts of Ambassador Brahimi by dispatching a team to investigate the killing of the Iranian diplomats in Mazar-e-Sharif on 8 August — an inhuman act that escalated the tensions between Iran and the Taliban. We also support the Secretary-General's proposal that the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan monitor the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan, provided that the safety and security of the members of this new unit are guaranteed and its mandate is clearly determined.

The Government of Japan continues to believe that, in addition to peacemaking, the United Nations must play a central role in addressing a range of issues in Afghanistan, including by improving humanitarian conditions, providing assistance for internally displaced persons and refugees and combating the production and trafficking of illegal drugs. We thus value highly the efforts of the United Nations in these areas over the past year, as described in the Secretary-General's report. Among the efforts being made by the international community to complement those of the United Nations are those made by the Afghanistan Support Group. As a matter of fact, a two-day meeting of the group concluded just today in Tokyo. At the meeting, which was hosted by Japan, the Group emphasized the importance of the early return of international humanitarian personnel to Afghanistan and the resumption of their assistance activities. It also called upon all factions, and particularly the Taliban, to guarantee the safety and security of those personnel.

Japan supports the "Points of Common Understanding" of the "six plus two" group, which encourage direct talks between the parties to the conflict with the aim of achieving an immediate ceasefire and national reconciliation. In that context, my Government has steadfastly and repeatedly called upon the parties concerned to exercise maximum restraint and strive to reach a peaceful settlement. On 23 September, Foreign Minister Komura spoke with Foreign Minister Aziz of Pakistan, asking that he relay to the Taliban Japan's strong view that the situation cannot be stabilized by military means, but only through a political solution. Two days later, on 25 September, he conveyed the same message to Foreign Minister Kharrazi of Iran. During the month of October Japan repeated that message to the Taliban directly and called upon it and the other parties to the conflict to heed the call of the international community to make good-faith efforts to protect human rights, halt the cultivation, production and trafficking of illegal drugs, and suppress international terrorism. It hopes that all the countries concerned will take active initiatives to address these issues.

On this occasion, permit me to reiterate Japan's concern at reports that the great Buddhist statue in Bamyan has been damaged and to call upon all parties to ensure that this precious cultural artifact is protected for future generations.

In closing, I would like to express the Japanese delegation's strong support for the draft resolution, which has been submitted at the initiative of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Shen Guofang (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): This has been a troubled year for Afghanistan, with a multitude of major incidents and events taking place in the country. China is deeply concerned by the fact that fighting has continued in Afghanistan and that a political solution to the conflict remains elusive. We condemn the harm done to United Nations personnel and the murder of Iranian diplomats. We view with sympathy and disquiet the havoc that has been wreaked on the economy and security of the people and the country of Afghanistan.

Afghanistan is a multi-ethnic country where ethnic problems have deep roots in history. With the involvement of outside forces, the complex of tensions

and contradictions becomes even more entrenched. In the past several months one faction in the country has won military victories, but the conflict has not ended as a result; it has only entered a new phase. We believe that any military advantage can only be temporary, and Afghan history and the present-day reality both show that military means will not contribute to the settlement of the conflict. The resumption of United Nations-sponsored negotiations among all the Afghan factions is the only way to resolve the Afghan conflict.

China sincerely hopes that the Afghan factions respond positively to the appeal of the international community and endeavour through negotiations to establish a broad-based, representative Government and to restore peace and stability as soon as possible. At the same time, we expect the international community to make concerted efforts to prevent outside forces from meddling in the Afghan conflict so as to create external conditions that will allow the silencing of the guns in Afghanistan.

The Chinese delegation appreciates the mediation efforts of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Brahimi, and of the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan, and it supports the United Nations continuing to play its central and leading role in the matter. China is ready to actively participate in and cooperate with the peacemaking initiative planned by the "six plus two" group and hopes that this initiative will create conditions for the resumption of talks among Afghan factions once winter sets in.

After years of prolonged war and turmoil, the Afghan people now thirst for peace and stability. The settlement of the Afghan question ultimately lies with the Afghan people themselves. We hope that the international community will exert a positive influence and that any action taken by the Security Council will contribute to the resumption of talks among the Afghan factions with a view to agreement on a plan for a political settlement.

It was based on this position of principle that the Chinese delegation took part in the consultations on the draft resolution. We are grateful to its sponsors for taking on board amendments proposed by my delegation. We appreciate the flexibility, patience and genuine willingness for cooperation they demonstrated during the consultations.

We will vote in favour of the draft resolution.

Mr. Türk (Slovenia): My delegation is grateful to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (S/1998/1109) on the situation in Afghanistan. All the relevant information, including that provided in the report, confirms that the situation in Afghanistan continues to constitute a threat to peace and security in the region. There are two dimensions of that threat.

First, the situation was seriously aggravated by tensions on the border between Afghanistan and Iran following the escalation of fighting in Afghanistan last summer, and especially after the killing of the Iranian diplomats in Mazar-e-Sharif. Tensions with Iran have since receded. However, the danger of renewed escalation has not yet been completely removed, and the situation remains serious.

The second and fundamental dimension is the situation in Afghanistan itself. The overall development in 1998 has been negative. This assessment applies to the political, military and humanitarian aspects. We would also like to express our deep concern at the continuing harbouring of terrorists in Afghan territory, as well as illegal drug production and trafficking.

The failure of the Ulema process last spring, and subsequent resumed fighting by the factions, was a serious setback for the efforts to bring a peace process to Afghanistan. No real solution is in sight, and the logic of military action is still prevailing over that of a political settlement which would reflect the interests of all ethnic, religious and social groups in the country.

Moreover, while the Taliban have made large military advances, the ethnic factors in the conflict are being heightened. As the Secretary-General pointed out in paragraph 55 of his report:

> "The atrocities committed by all parties involved in the conflict over the past two years have widened the ethnic and religious divide between different Afghan communities and have further undermined the social fabric of Afghanistan, which has been rendered fragile by almost two decades of war."

Many of the killings have been of a retaliatory nature. This is disturbing, and may lead to a protracted military conflict, with no real end in sight. The political solutions are likely to be even more difficult.

Recent reports of mass killings of civilians belonging principally to the Shi'a Hazara minority in Mazar-e-Sharif and other allegations of serious violations

of human rights and of international humanitarian law are a cause for serious concern. Afghanistan remains one of the world's most intractable human rights disasters. In the light of this, and given the new characteristics of the conflict, there is a need for additional efforts for protection of the bare minimum of human rights. We support the proposal of the Secretary-General to add a new civil affairs unit to the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan (UNSMA), security conditions permitting, with the primary objective of promoting respect for minimum humanitarian standards and deterring massive and systematic violations of human rights in the future.

We also call upon the Taliban to cooperate with the United Nations in investigating the killings of Iranian diplomats in Mazar-e-Sharif, with a view to prosecuting those responsible.

The humanitarian situation in Afghanistan remains grave, and the efforts of the international community have been seriously plagued by deteriorating security conditions, attacks on personnel, impediments and restrictions on their work. We reiterate our call to the Taliban to provide a full report on the killing of Afghan staff members of the World Food Programme and of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the member of UNSMA in Afghanistan, and to meet the conditions to facilitate the return of the United Nations personnel, programmes and funds to the country to resume their work.

We salute UNSMA and the humanitarian and aid workers for their dedicated work. They have done their utmost in the most difficult circumstances. We would also like to commend the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, for the results of his recent mission to the region and his success in defusing tensions between Afghanistan and Iran.

A durable settlement can be achieved only through a ceasefire and the start of political dialogue among Afghans, leading to national reconciliation and the establishment of a genuinely broad-based, multi-ethnic and representative Government.

Two types of efforts must be strengthened in the immediate future. First, political efforts within the "six plus two" group should continue to assist in creating conditions conducive to a successful peace process. The proposed meeting of the group to be held in Tashkent with Afghan factions could be an important step in that direction, and careful preparations should provide ground for concrete and substantive results. A coherent approach to the problem also implies renunciation of military assistance to all sides in conflict in Afghanistan.

Secondly, efforts to investigate the alleged massacres and violations of international law must be strengthened. The importance of this task is increasing. The delays accumulated in the efforts to investigate atrocities which have been committed in earlier periods must not become standard. Careful investigation and publication of results will be of great value per se and could also contribute to the political efforts to initiate a meaningful peace process.

Slovenia believes that the draft resolution submitted to the Security Council today responds to the main requirements of the situation and will vote in favour of it.

Mr. Richmond (United Kingdom): The Secretary-General's report (S/1998/1109) makes depressing reading. We have witnessed another year of conflict, population displacement and yet more suffering for the people of Afghanistan. Nor is it only the Afghan people who have suffered. The murder of the staff of the Iranian Consulate in Mazar-e-Sharif has been rightly condemned by the international community. The murders of Lt. Colonel Calo and other United Nations staff were also atrocious acts, demonstrating a total disregard for the brave efforts of United Nations personnel to bring hope to Afghanistan. The Taliban must cooperate in the investigation of those crimes.

The further deterioration in the human rights situation in Afghanistan, including the latest persecution of ethnic and religious minorities, is particularly worrying. Following the massacres of prisoners of war last year, there is a grave danger that Afghanistan is sliding into a spiral of atrocities.

This is why the United Kingdom strongly supports the Secretary-General's proposal to establish a unit of civilian monitors within the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan (UNSMA). We hope the monitors will be able to give early warning of ethnic or religious conflict in order to help prevent further gross violations of human rights. They will need the factions' full cooperation. We will be pressing the factions to work constructively with the monitors.

It is deeply disturbing that some countries which profess to support peace in Afghanistan continue to prolong the war by supplying the factions with arms and

funding. The call on all States to demonstrate their commitment to peace by stopping the supply of arms is as clear and strong in the draft resolution before us today as it was in resolution 1193 (1998). All Member States should comply with that call.

There can be no question of the Security Council's taking sides in the Afghan conflict. The Secretary-General's report makes it clear that all factions are guilty of abusing human rights, violating Security Council and General Assembly resolutions and inflicting further suffering on the people of Afghanistan.

The Council's responsibility is to the Afghan people. It requires us to increase the pressure on all factions to stop the fighting and to recognize that the conflict can only have a political solution which safeguards the rights of all ethnic and religious groups in Afghanistan. Our first objective must be to get the factions back to the negotiating table.

Both as a member of the European Union and through its bilateral programmes, the United Kingdom is one of the principal donors of humanitarian aid to Afghanistan. We are committed to continuing that assistance. It is deeply frustrating that the factions — and in particular the Taliban — are preventing aid from reaching their own people. They must allow the safe and effective delivery of aid, in accordance with international principles, without further delay.

The international community must also act to prevent the conflict from threatening lives beyond Afghanistan's borders through the export of international terrorism and illegal drugs. Afghanistan's record is one of the worst in the world in these areas.

I would like to conclude by reiterating the United Kingdom's strong support for the efforts of the Secretary-General, his Special Envoy, Ambassador Brahimi, and the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan. We hope that they will continue their work for peace in Afghanistan. Too often, they have been working against the odds. If they are to succeed, all States must give them their full and active support. We welcome the work of the "six plus two" in this regard and urge them to redouble their efforts. With all these points in mind, the United Kingdom will vote in favour of the draft resolution before us.

Mr. Lidén (Sweden): The draft resolution before us testifies to the continued concern of the Security Council about the situation in Afghanistan. It sends an unequivocal message to the Taliban and the other parties, as well as to Afghanistan's neighbours and other States concerned, calling for an end to the suffering of the Afghan people and for a peaceful solution to the conflict in Afghanistan.

Sweden remains convinced that military means will not bring peace to Afghanistan. This should be obvious after so many years of devastating war. The road to real peace would start by a ceasefire, which would be followed by a political dialogue with the aim of forming a genuinely broad-based, multi-ethnic and representative Government. A political system has to be established which takes into account the legitimate concerns of the ethnic, religious and social groups in the country.

We call upon the Taliban and the other factions in Afghanistan to follow that road. It is equally imperative that all States in the region and elsewhere give their full support to such a course of action and refrain from fanning the flames of war in Afghanistan. We welcome the fact that the "six plus two" group of countries has provided a forum for talks on the Afghan issue and we look forward to their proposed meeting in Tashkent. With the participation of all major Afghan factions, that meeting could be the starting point of a genuine peace process. At the same time, we are somewhat perplexed by the reports that some of those countries continue to supply weapons and war *matériel* that fuel the conflict, instead of promoting their more obvious long-term interest, which ought to be a peaceful and stable Afghanistan. The flow of arms into that conflict-ridden country must cease.

The alternative to a real process towards peace would in all likelihood be a further aggravation of the situation. There are worrying signs that the conflict is taking on clear ethnic and religious dimensions. Serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights continue and the use of landmines is still taking a very heavy toll on civilians. Winter may bring additional suffering to the innocent victims of war in Afghanistan. Moreover, we cannot neglect the risk of an extended regionalization of the conflict. This dimension further underscores the responsibility of the Security Council with respect to the situation in Afghanistan.

Sweden has a long-standing involvement in Afghanistan as a main donor of humanitarian assistance. We remain gravely concerned about the humanitarian situation in the country and continue to demand that all parties comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law. All violations of human rights must cease, including the systematic discrimination against

women and girls, practised in particular by the Taliban. Other fundamental international norms must also be complied with, including those on combating terrorism and illegal drugs. All Afghan factions must close down training camps for terrorists inside Afghanistan and participate in the international struggle against terrorism. Due to war and conflict, the economy of Afghanistan is to a large extent dependent on illegal activities. The illegal drug business is the cause of human suffering far beyond the borders of Afghanistan.

The case of Afghanistan illustrates that, in today's world, no country can separate itself from the international community. Events in Afghanistan have not only major humanitarian consequences, but also serious international repercussions.

Sweden strongly supports the continued active role of the Secretary-General, his Special Envoy and the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan (UNSMA) in facilitating peace and national reconciliation in Afghanistan. We support the proposal of the Secretary-General for a new civil affairs unit in UNSMA, tasked with promoting respect for minimum humanitarian standards. We also welcome the proposal for an investigation into reports of extremely serious violations of international humanitarian law in 1997 and 1998, including in Mazar-e-Sharif.

Mr. Dejammet (France) (*interpretation from French*): The draft resolution before us is necessary. It describes a situation that has become intolerable over the years: ongoing conflict, external interference, discrimination, the assassination of Iranian diplomatic personnel, the murders of high-ranking United Nations officials, humanitarian crisis and unacceptable constraints imposed upon humanitarian agencies and non-governmental organizations.

We pay tribute to the tireless and intelligent work of the Secretary-General's Special Envoy, Mr. Brahimi, whose most recent mission helped to reduce tensions in the region. He deserves all our support.

We also understand the Secretary-General's proposals, which we believe can be implemented, provided, of course, that all necessary security measures are taken. For the time being, however, the fighting goes on and we must acknowledge that negotiations between the parties have yet to resume. The United Front is prepared to open a political dialogue with the Taliban and to conclude a ceasefire. The Taliban, for its part, has shown no readiness to resume the negotiations or to put an end to hostilities.

It is therefore fitting that the draft resolution before us, while referring to all the factions, concerns the Taliban first and foremost and lays out the Council's demands to it. It is also appropriate that the draft — like the previous resolution on this topic, which laid out the terms of a settlement — should reflect the idea that the Council is prepared to consider imposing further measures in order fully to implement its resolutions. Thus, this is yet another text responding to the difficulties and gravity of events in Afghanistan and my country will therefore vote in its favour.

Mr. Jagne (Gambia): It will be recalled that following the recent visit to Afghanistan and the neighbouring countries by the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Afghanistan, Ambassador Brahimi, my delegation, having listened to him with rapt attention congratulated him warmly on what he had been able to achieve during that delicate and difficult mission. It was successful by all accounts. Yes, it could be described as modest, but at the same time, it provides us with some concrete elements to build upon if we wish to exploit the window of opportunity that has been opened.

In the face of the overwhelming evidence that the Taliban control most of the national territory, vain threats, ultimatums and inflammatory language might be counter-productive. It must also be made very clear that a military solution to the Afghan crisis is certainly not the best option and it is not in the long-term interest of the people of Afghanistan. The delegation of the Gambia is in favour of a negotiated settlement through the "six plus two" talks, not a military onslaught.

It should be recognized as well that the six plus two process has thus far achieved little. Moving the peace process forward depends largely on that process adopting one attitude and speaking with one voice. We wonder how the legitimate concerns of the countries concerned can be addressed if they themselves do not take the process seriously.

This is why my delegation looks forward to the next meeting of the six-plus-two to be held in the region, with the participation of all the interested parties.

We have no doubt that if all the parties concerned muster enough political will, there will be a radical departure from the stage of mere damage control to the serious quest for conflict resolution. In our view, this is where the emphasis should be placed.

Let us face it: demonizing the Taliban alone will not yield the desired results; the six plus two talks hold the key to a lasting solution in Afghanistan. Let all the parties concerned redouble their efforts in order to jump-start the process. This offers a better prospect for the formation of a broad-based Government, not only to guarantee a lasting peace in Afghanistan, but also to respond adequately to the security concerns of the neighbouring countries.

The draft resolution before us should have put more emphasis on the achievements made by Ambassador Brahimi. All the same, we will vote in favour of it in the hope that it will be implemented in that spirit.

Mr. Monteiro (Portugal): Since the Council last discussed the disturbing situation in Afghanistan, on 28 August 1998, the political and humanitarian situation in the country has deteriorated further.

In September and October, fighting again intensified and the conflict escalated, provoking alarming regional repercussions. We were concerned, and still are, about the increased threat of the Afghan civil war becoming a regional conflict, and particularly about the rise of military tensions along Afghanistan's borders. We would like to commend the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Ambassador Brahimi, for helping ease those tensions.

The latest fighting has brought about a new phase in the Afghanistan conflict. One of the parties has taken control of most of the country, and it seems convinced that it is in a position to take over militarily the entire Afghan territory.

That might be true at this stage. But in reality, the warring factions must recognize that the conflict cannot be settled on the battlefield. Any thought of a conclusive military victory by one party is an illusion. History, old and new, shows us that a military conquest by one of the warring parties will not bring an end to the Afghan conflict.

Portugal stands for a political settlement, negotiated between the factions and accommodating the rights and interests of all Afghans. We therefore strongly support the demand that the Afghan factions stop fighting and enter urgently into negotiations, under United Nations auspices, aimed at creating a fully representative and broad-based Government.

We remain deeply concerned by continuing reports of outside interference in the affairs of Afghanistan. Although the enmity between the Afghan factions is deep, we are convinced that the continuation of the conflict is, to a great extent, a consequence of intervention from outside.

All countries with an influence on the factions in Afghanistan would do more to promote peace and regional stability by using that influence to prevent the supply of arms and other military support and to encourage the parties to negotiate.

The reports of ethnic- and religious-based persecution represent a particularly worrying aspect of the current situation in Afghanistan. Like others, we strongly condemn the murder of Iranian diplomats and the occupation of the Consulate General of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Mazar-e-Sharif, which represented a flagrant violation of international law and of the Vienna Conventions on Diplomatic and Consular Relations.

The increasingly ethnic nature of the conflict poses a threat to the unity of the Afghan State and makes it more difficult to find a peaceful political solution. We urge all factions to ensure the safety of civilian communities and to facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance,

We also deplore the widespread violations of human rights in Afghanistan, which continues to be a place where human rights and international humanitarian law do not seem to exist. The continuing and intolerable discrimination imposed by the Taliban against women is a particular source of concern.

The Afghan factions must not expect the international community to accept their general lack of commitment to recognize, protect and promote human rights. In this context, my country strongly supports the Secretary-General's proposal to establish within the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan a civil affairs unit aimed at monitoring and promoting respect for international humanitarian standards and human rights, as well as at preventing grave violations of human rights in the future.

Another two sources of grave concern are drug-trafficking and the continuing presence of terrorists and terrorist training camps in Afghanistan, both factors with far-reaching repercussions inside and outside the country. No political movement, no matter how much territory it controls, will gain international respectability as long as it is perceived to be harbouring terrorist activities. These

completely intolerable and destabilizing practices represent global threats, and they must cease immediately.

In conclusion, Portugal, supporting the efforts of the "six plus two", will vote in favour of the draft resolution before us and urges all Afghan factions to comply fully with it and to put an end to the suffering of the Afghan people.

Mr. Mahugu (Kenya): On 28 August 1998, when we last discussed the situation in Afghanistan in a formal meeting, my delegation expressed its deep disappointment at the stalemate in the peace process and the determination by the Taliban, in particular, to resolve the crisis in Afghanistan by military means. The Council's repeated calls for restraint and diplomacy, as well as appeals to stop all foreign involvement, in the form of overt military and financial support, have fallen on deaf ears.

The Secretary-General's current report on the situation in Afghanistan crystallizes these concerns and disappointments. Fighting continues unabated, with the overt and covert military and financial support of Member States; diplomatic efforts are at an impasse; the humanitarian crisis has expanded; human rights have not improved; allegations of support for terrorist activities abound; and illegal trafficking in drugs continues unabated.

In all our previous interventions regarding the crisis in Afghanistan, we have always stressed that foreign involvement in the Afghan quagmire was the main cause of the continuation of the conflict. This reality has been highlighted on several occasions: by the Secretary-General in his reports to us, by the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan (UNSMA), by Mr. Brahimi and through independent reporting. It is clear that this interference has not changed at all. Indeed, paragraph 10 of the Secretary-General's latest report (S/1998/1109) speaks about the "stark examples" of such outside interference. In paragraph 29 of the report, we are also told that the United Front leaders complain bitterly of such external interference, which they consider the main reason for their defeat and the continuation of war.

We therefore share the Secretary-General's frustration and disappointment in paragraph 71 of the report that some of the members of the "six plus two" group continue to supply the weapons and other war *matériel* that fuel the conflict in Afghanistan. We also believe it is hypocritical for such nations to speak of peaceful solutions to the conflict while continuing covert and now overt military support for the Afghan factions.

Therefore, it becomes increasingly difficult for us in the Council to continue backing rhetorical demands for compliance with Security Council resolutions. We join the Secretary-General in appealing to these countries to be more forthright and transparent in their dealings with the United Nations with regard to Afghanistan.

My delegation highly values the dedication and diplomatic perseverance that the Secretary-General's Special Envoy, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, has invested in trying to achieve a peaceful solution to the crisis in Afghanistan. His efforts continue to be beset by divisions on the United Front side and delusions of a complete military victory on the Taliban side. In addition, his efforts to reduce regional tensions have born fruit. We share the Secretary-General's view that Mr. Brahimi's achievements should be built upon in collaboration with the Group of 21 and the six plus two group. Although these additional efforts have not completely come to fruition, we believe that consistent pressure organized under the aegis of the United Nations will eventually give birth to a peaceful solution. Equally important is the continuation of the parallel effort between UNSMA and all United Nations funds and programmes to strengthen their coordination and make it more effective in the context of a post-conflict peace-building effort. In this regard, we commend Japan for organizing and hosting in Tokyo a meeting of the Afghanistan Support Group which just concluded today.

On the eve of the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, my delegation continues to be concerned about the allegations of massive rights violations by all sides in the Afghan conflict. In this regard, my delegation appreciates the Secretary-General's intention to establish a Civil Affairs Unit within UNSMA to "monitor the situation and, through their presence, seek to promote respect for minimum humanitarian standards and deter massive and systematic violations of human rights and humanitarian law in the future" (*S/1998/1139, second paragraph*).

When Kenya joined in co-sponsoring Security Council resolution 1193 (1998) on 28 August this year, we did so because we believed that the Council had again to convey a clear, unequivocal message to the combatants that the problem in Afghanistan had to be resolved by peaceful means, through negotiations, and not by military means. The resolution before us today sends a similar message and sharpens it to include demands that the Taliban stop providing sanctuary and training for

international terrorists and their organizations and that all Afghan factions cooperate with efforts to bring the indicted terrorists to justice. This is why Kenya has joined the consensus on the draft resolution before us and will indeed vote in favour of it.

In conclusion, my delegation takes this opportunity to commend highly the excellent work done by Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi, the Secretary-General's Special Envoy; the Acting Head of UNSMA, Mr. James Ngobi, who will be leaving the Mission at the end of the year; all the men and women of UNSMA and the other humanitarian agencies in Afghanistan; and Lieutenant Colonel Calo, former Deputy Military Adviser of UNSMA, Nazir Habibi of UNHCR, and Hushim Bashayar of the World Food Programme, who gave their lives for the cause of peace in Afghanistan.

Mr. Cordeiro (Brazil): The situation in Afghanistan has long been of concern to the international community. The United Nations has been deeply involved in the process of restoring peace and normalcy in that country. Today, the Security Council will adopt a new resolution that Brazil will support. Soon the General Assembly will also pass its annual resolution dealing with the situation in that country.

Since Brazil joined the Council, my delegation has been closely following events in Afghanistan. In the first half of this year, there was hope that a ceasefire would be attained and that a negotiated settlement of the internal political situation could be reached through a dialogue to be conducted by Islamic scholars and religious leaders.

Soon, however, the Taliban militia abandoned the peace talks and resorted to military means. Their offensive led to the conquest of most of the remaining territory under the control of the United Front. During that process, the civilian population in Afghanistan was continuously subjected to acts of violence and measures aimed at curtailing its rights.

There have been, indeed, serious complaints of persecution based upon religious affiliation, ethnic origin and gender. The situation of girls and women in Afghanistan is particularly worrisome.

After 20 years of war, the situation in Afghanistan is a bleak one. On August 6, though a presidential statement, the Council condemned the killing of two Afghan staff members — of the World Food Programme and of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Jalalabad — and deplored the measures taken by the Taliban that made it impossible for all international humanitarian organizations to operate in the country and provide much-needed assistance.

Some days later, on 21 August, two United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan officials were attacked. This act resulted in the death of Lieutenant-Colonel Carmine Calo of Italy. The continued fighting and the events following the fall of Mazar-e-Sharif led to the adoption of resolution 1193 (1998). At that time the Security Council then expressed its grave concern with the capture of the Iranian Consulate General in the city of Mazar-e-Sharif and condemned the assassination of Colonel Calo.

The Council issued another presidential statement on 15 September by which it condemned the murder of Iranian diplomats and a journalist by Taliban troops and called on all parties to show restraint. As the situation between Iran and the Taliban deteriorated, the Secretary-General sent his Special Envoy, Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi, to the region. This initiative contributed to averting an open international conflict. The Council expressed its support for Ambassador Brahimi's new mission in a statement to the press on 16 October.

The Council has been dealing with and giving its full attention to the situation in Afghanistan.

The lasting peace which that country needs can be brought about only through dialogue. Internally, this means the establishment of a democratic and participatory process that would include all ethnic and cultural groups that form the Afghan people. Externally, the involvement of all neighbouring countries is essential. The "six plus two" process seems to be a useful forum which should engage the various Afghan parties in the peace negotiations.

Brazil hopes that the preparations for the talks to be held in Tashkent will be speedy. The Taliban should not impose preconditions for attending the meeting.

Brazil considers that the draft resolution on the situation in Afghanistan that we are to adopt is a balanced one. It addresses in an appropriate way the plethora of problems that afflict the Afghan people and supports the suggestions made by the Secretary-General, especially the establishment of a small civil observer unit charged with the prevention of gross violations of both humanitarian law and human rights. It also provides for United Nations

cooperation in the investigations of the alleged massacres and the murder of the Iranian personnel.

Afghanistan and its people deserve to have a participatory democracy, to be free from foreign interference, from the scourge of drugs and terrorism. A legitimate Afghan Government has to base its power on the will of its people, provide safety to its minorities and follow some minimum standards of international behaviour.

It is high time for the Afghan factions to genuinely engage in the search for peace. The inability to do so will result in more suffering and destruction inside Afghanistan and delay the moment in which the international community can contribute constructively to the welfare of its people.

The President *(interpretation from Arabic):* I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Bahrain.

Bahrain is concerned at the continuing situation in Afghanistan, a situation of instability due to the continued fighting in parts of the country. It appeals to all Afghan factions to give priority to a political solution over a military solution and to conclude a ceasefire followed by political negotiations to reach a peaceful solution to the Afghan conflict.

In this context, Bahrain pays tribute to the efforts by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, to reach a peaceful solution of the Afghan problem and thereby reduce tension in the region.

Moreover, Bahrain believes that the efforts by the "six plus two" group will lead to positive results if pursued in a balanced manner in tandem with those made by the United Nations. We hope that efforts aimed at holding a ministerial meeting of the group in Tashkent with the participation of all principal Afghan factions will be crowned with success.

Bahrain affirms the importance of continued contributions by the United Nations and specialized agencies in providing humanitarian relief to the Afghan people, which has suffered from war and natural disasters.

Bahrain will vote in favour of the draft resolution before us.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I shall now put to the vote the draft resolution contained in document S/1998/1140.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Bahrain, Brazil, China, Costa Rica, France, Gabon, Gambia, Japan, Kenya, Portugal, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President (*interpretation from Arabic*): There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1214 (1998).

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 6.35 p.m.